
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 07702119 (England and Wales)

**Report of the Trustees and
Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 August 2023
for
Empower Learning Academy Trust
(A Company Limited by Guarantee)**

Empower Learning Academy Trust

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for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

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Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Reference and Administrative Details
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

MEMBERS:	D T Forster T Parsons E Ward M D Evans J Mckernan
TRUSTEES	J Brooks K Butcher A Farrow (resigned 1/9/2023) DN Harries S London K J Stewart D J Godwin (resigned 28/5/2023) J Asante (resigned 28/5/2023) M A O Akinyosade (appointed 1/6/2023) J Sesli (appointed 1/9/2023) P G Reynolds (appointed 1/6/2023)
COMPANY SECRETARY	A Frater
REGISTERED OFFICE	Hall Mead School Marlborough Gardens Upminster Essex RM14 1SF
REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER	07702119 (England and Wales)
AUDITORS	Cartwrights Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors Statutory Auditor Regency House 33 Wood Street Barnet Hertfordshire EN5 4BE
BANKERS	Lloyds Bank Plc 1-3 Market Place Romford Essex RM1 3AA

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Reference and Administrative Details
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

SOLICITORS

Winkworth Sherwood
Minerva House
5 Montague Close
London
SE1 9BB

SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

Chief Executive Officer - S London
Chief Operating Officer - A Frater

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

The trustees who are also directors of the academy trust for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the academy trust for the year ended 31 August 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019) and the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The academy trust operates 6 academies serving catchment areas in the London Borough of Havering:

School	Pupils
Ardleigh Green Infant School, 4 - 7 mainstream infant academy	271
Ardleigh Green Primary School, 7 - 11 mainstream primary academy	365
Bower Park Academy, 11-16 mainstream secondary academy	1,034
Hacton Primary School, 3-11 mainstream primary academy	612
Hall Mead School, 11-16 mainstream secondary academy	1,073
The Brittons Academy, 11-16 mainstream secondary academy	677

Pupil numbers are taken from the school census dated 6 October 2023.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

The principal object and activity of the academy trust is to provide education for pupils of all ages in and around the London Borough of Havering.

In setting the objectives and planning the academy trust's activities, the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

The main objectives of the academy trust during the year ended 31 August 2023 are summarised below:

- Embody the purpose and values of the trust within the academy communities
- Ensure a broad and balanced curriculum is accessible to all
- Refresh teaching and learning with a greater emphasis on knowledge, skills and critical thinking
- Create a supportive culture centred around high expectations
- Build a composite IT platform that supports the improvement of educational delivery
- Build a self-sustaining governance model that is reflective, diverse and knowledgeable
- Build a capacity for continual school improvement by growing the trust to a sustainable level
- Support recovery from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Significant activities

The academy trust's main strategy is encompassed in its mission statement, "Inspiring Learners, Changing Lives" and its mission: "to inspire our family of schools to provide opportunities for our pupils, staff and leaders to be the best they can be; to create a passion for lifelong learning; and to enable our pupils to become confident, kind and impactful world citizens."

The academy trust's vision is to build a family of local primary and secondary schools with a shared ethos of continual improvement, where powerful teaching, challenge, support and accountability lie at the heart of creating environments that focus relentlessly on the needs of the learning community and delivers outstanding outcomes for all pupils.

The academy trust has determined a core set of values, which are:

- Passion
- Respect
- Inclusion
- Challenge
- Openness

The trustees have set out some key beliefs to underpin the vision and values, which are as follows:

- The power of teaching to transform lives
- Developing exceptional leadership at all levels
- Clear empowerment and accountability
- Providing outstanding personal and professional development
- Building self-esteem at all levels of the trust community
- Creating a culture of high expectations
- Rewarding effort
- Making learning fun

Public benefit

The academy trust's aims are set out in this report. The trustees have complied with their duty under section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission and the trustees have paid due regard to this guidance in deciding what activities the academy trust should undertake.

Equal opportunity policy

The trustees recognise that equal opportunities are an integral part of good practice in the workplace. The academy trust aims to ensure equal opportunity permeates all areas of its activities including creating a working environment in which the contribution and needs of every person is fully valued.

Disabled Persons

The academy trust supports the recruitment and retention of students and employees with disabilities and facilitates this through training and career development and, where necessary, by making support resources available and adapting the physical environment.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievement and performance

Charitable activities

The main activities undertaken by the academy trust in the year were:

Governance

- Strengthened the board of trustees with 2 new trustee appointments, strengthened Local Governance Committees at Hall Mead School, The Brittons Academy and Bower Park Academy.
- Appointed new Chairs of the Local Governance Committees at Hall Mead School and Bower Park Academy.
- Successfully on-boarded 2 schools comprising Ardleigh Green Learning Federation in December 2022.

Vision, values and strategy

- Successfully delivered the academy trust 3-year strategy and drafted a successor plan in readiness for the 2023/26 period.
- Provided extensive 'Catch-Up' programmes across the academy trust's academies and an intelligently designed pastoral support plan with mental health programmes and professional development on trauma-informed teaching.
- Ran a trust-wide staff survey which was used to inform the Staff Wellbeing Strategy.

School improvement

Over the last financial year, the academy trust has taken a wide range of steps to ensure that the educational standards for all pupils have continued to improve. These included:

- Refreshed the leadership at Bower Park Academy and increased leadership capacity so as to accelerate improvements in behaviour and quality of teaching.
- Introduced new approach to self-evaluation and in-school improvement planning using the 'Curriculum Enhancement Plan' model.
- Collective collaboration through subject networks with a particular focus on GCSE content and assessment.
- Forged links and peer networks amongst the primary academies with a focus on sharing best practice.
- Embedded 'Subject Area Networks' via senior leads and Intranet platform.
- Worked with Hall Mead School and Bower Park Academy to ensure 'Ofsted readiness'.
- Rolled out the academy trust's Data Dashboards enabling real time self-evaluation and dynamic response to emerging issues, alongside clearer reporting to the academy trust board and governing committees.
- Evaluated and revised Headteacher Report for Local Governing Committees and calendar of reporting milestones so as to be more accessible for Governing Committee members, consistent across the trust and impactful.

Internal organisation

- Internally recruited new Headteachers on 'acting' basis at Bower Park Academy and Hall Mead School.
- Prepared organisational structure and services for on-boarding of Ardleigh Green Learning Federation schools in December 2022
- Appointed Director of Academy Improvement, part of new phase of school support

Examination results 2023

COVID-19 had a significant impact on the education system and this disruption affected schools and pupils differently and because of this, it will make it more difficult to interpret why the results are as they are, using the data alone. For 2023, the DfE is strongly discouraging people from drawing conclusions based on comparisons with performance data from earlier years, and based on direct comparisons with other school's or colleges' performance data. It also advises caution when comparing a school's or college's performance with national or local authority averages.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

2023 Headline measures for Empower Learning Academy Trust secondary academies were as follows:

Secondary

	Attainment 8	Progress 8	Grade 5 or above in English and maths GCSEs	EBacc average point score
Bower Park Academy	40.7	-0.66	41%	3.65
Hall Mead School	46.9	-0.16	52%	4.39
The Brittons Academy	41.6	-0.41	28%	3.36

Primary

	Achieving exp in Year 1 Phonics
Ardleigh Green Infant School	76%
Hacton Primary School	86%

	Achieving expected in RW&M
Ardleigh Green Junior School	76%
Hacton Primary School	87%

Fundraising activities

The academy trust does not use any external fundraisers. All fundraising undertaken during the year was monitored by the Trustees.

Key financial performance indicators

Other than the attainment targets for academic achievement, the board of trustees use both financial and other non-financial key performance indicators to manage the academy trust. The academy trust maintains a strong management information function which is focussed on regular and accurate reporting. Financial KPIs are measured continuously.

During the year the following key performance indicators were used:

	2023	2022
- Ofsted category	1,1,2,2	1,1,2,4
- Staff turnover	4.4%	4.5%
- Surplus/(deficit) of income over expenditure (excluding depreciation** and actuarial gains/losses on defined benefit pension schemes)	£11,519,441	(£1,111,260)
- Pupil absence*	7.8%	-
- Pupil persistent absence*	22.1%	-

*Combined data for Hacton Primary School, Bower Park Academy, Hall Mead School and The Brittons Academy.

Ardleigh Green Schools did not join the academy trust until December 2022. The combined attendance data for them from December 2022 until Whitsun 2023 was 5.6% Absence and 17.2% Persistent Absence.

**Excluding the transfer in of both Ardleigh Green School's, the deficit was £63,585.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Achievement and performance

Promoting the success of the company

The trustees of the academy trust, which is a charitable company, must act in a way most likely to promote the success of the charitable company (i.e. to promote the success of the academy trust to achieve its charitable purposes). In doing so, the academy trust must have regard to the:

- Likely consequences of any decision in the long term
- Interests of the academy trust's employees
- Need to foster the academy trust's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others
- Impact of the academy trust's operations on the community and the environment
- Desirability of the academy trust maintaining a reputation for high standards of charitable and business conduct
- Need to act fairly as between the schools and pupils of the academy trust

Decisions made by the board of trustees, its executive and members always have due regard for long term consequences. All decision making is aligned with school improvement, by and through staying true to the academy trust's vision and values, as set out in the objectives and aims.

Employees of the academy trust are key to delivering success. The academy trust has invested further in training activities, reward schemes such as a discount cycle to work arrangement and employee assistance programme, whilst continuing to identify, develop and promote talent within the organisation.

Business relationships are an important support to the academy trust. The approach to engagement with suppliers, customers and others can be found in the structure, governance and management section of the trustees' report.

The academy trust seeks to minimise any adverse impact of operations on its community and environment. Steps to reduce carbon emissions, fossil fuel use and the implementation of renewable energy provision are set out under the SECR of this report.

As described elsewhere in the strategic report, the academy trust is focussed on continuous improvement of standards and conduct through a process of effective governance. This year, efforts to recruit a more diverse academy trust board and membership of the LGC's has been successful.

The further centralisation of services and clear, agreed improvement plans at each academy, serves to ensure the academy trust acts fairly in its deployment of resources and is able to focus effort on the greatest area of need.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Financial review

Financial position

Most of the academy trust's income is obtained from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) in the form of recurrent grants, the use of which is restricted to particular purposes. Those grants received from the ESFA during the year ended 31 August 2023 and the associated expenditure are shown as restricted funds in the Statement of Financial Activities.

The academy trust has also been in receipt of capital grants from the ESFA as a result of bids made to the academies' capital maintenance fund. In accordance with the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice, 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities', FRS102, such grants are shown in the Statement of Financial Activities as restricted income in the fixed asset fund. The restricted fixed asset fund balance is reduced by annual depreciation charges over the expected useful life of the assets concerned.

During the year ended 31 August 2023, total expenditure was incurred of £30,705,517 (2022 - £26,028,372). Income received in the year was £41,530,751 (2022 -£23,936,076) although this included £12,595,246 of income transferred in in respect of Ardleigh Green Infant School and Ardleigh Green Primary School assets treated as being brought into the multi-academy trust. Excluding this transfer in, total income in the year 31 August 2023 was £28,935,505, resulting in an underlying deficit before actuarial gains/losses on defined benefit schemes of £1,770,012 in the year ended 31 August 2023 (2022: £2,092,296 deficit).

The current year surplus is largely achieved as a result of donated fixed asset income of £13.1m in relation to the buildings acquired in respect of Ardleigh Green Infant School and Ardleigh Green Primary School. Excluding these exceptional transactions, the underlying deficit in 2023 before actuarial gains/losses on defined benefit pension schemes was £1,770,012.

At 31 August 2023 the net book value of tangible fixed assets was £95,609,310 (2022: £83,254,508) and movements in tangible fixed assets are shown in the fixed assets note to the financial statements. The assets were used exclusively for providing education and the associated support services to the pupils of the academy trust.

In accordance with FRS102, the academy trust received an actuarial assessment of the financial position of academy trust staff who are members of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), but in common with other academies it received no detailed information about the financial position of academy trust staff who are members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS). The LGPS assets, liabilities and deficit in respect of the Academy staff are included within the Balance Sheet as at 31 August 2023 and supporting notes to the financial statements. The assets, liabilities and deficit of the TPS in respect of the academy trust staff are not included within the Balance Sheet for the reason explained in note 1 of the financial statements.

Investment policy and objectives

The academy trust's investment policy outlines the principal parameters and guidelines by which the academy trust manages its cash balances to ensure it is able to meet its day to day working capital needs.

Interest bearing deposit accounts may be held with sound financial institutions only. Rates of interest are reviewed periodically to ensure reasonable returns are being achieved.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Financial review

Reserves policy

The trustees review the reserve levels of the academy trust annually. This review encompasses the nature of income and expenditure streams, the need to match income with commitments and the nature of reserves. It is intended where possible that the level of reserves provide sufficient working capital to cover delays between spending and receipt of grants and to provide a cushion to deal with unexpected costs.

The academy trust's current level of free reserves (total funds less the amounts held in fixed assets and restricted funds) is £2,253,829 (2022: £2,056,310). The trustees intend to build up to the desired level the academy trust's free reserves over time when financial conditions allow.

The level of reserves held balances the belief that funds provided in year for the education of pupils should be spent on those pupils in year with the goal of maintaining a desired level of free reserves.

At 31 August 2023 the total funds comprised:

Unrestricted general funds	£2,253,829
Restricted funds - general	(£2,845,511)
Restricted funds - pension reserve	(£596,000)
Total restricted funds	(£3,441,511)
Restricted funds - fixed asset	£95,609,311
Total funds	£94,421,629

Going concern

After making appropriate enquiries and considering the academy trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education is only terminable on seven years' notice, or other exceptional events, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. For this reason, it continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. Further details regarding the adoption of the going concern basis can be found in the Statement of Accounting Policies.

The trustees are aware that funding for schools is an ever-evolving formula with this year seeing revisions to the Teacher Pay Grant, Teacher Pension Grant and the pupil recovery premium. The academy trust bases its forecasts on information currently available or where not available on assumptions the trustees believe to be reasonable

The trustees are aware of the changing financial demands that the academy trust is facing over the next few years with small increases to per pupil funding, increased costs of staffing and other resources.

However, three of the academies increased their Pupil Admission Number (PAN) from 1 September 2021 by a total of 67 pupils meaning that over the next five years the academy trust should gain an extra 335 pupils, thereby receiving increased funding. The Brittons Academy has temporarily agreed with the Local Authority to fix its PAN at a lower level facilitating a drop in teaching time required to deliver the curriculum.

Since 84% of the academy trust's costs are staff related, the trustees continue to review staffing structures across the academy trust. Having conducted further centralisation of non-teaching functions enabling some additional streamlining of activity, the trustees are confident that plans will result in a balancing of the academy trust's in year budget by 2023/24.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

STRATEGIC REPORT

Financial review

Funds in deficit

The pension reserve is in deficit due to the academy trust's share of the LGPS liabilities exceeding its share of the assets. This deficit will generally result in a cash outflow effect for the academy trust in the form of increased employers' contributions over a period of years.

The restricted general fund is in deficit largely due to increasing staff costs which have not been fully met by government funding. These costs were necessary to enable the academy trust to fulfil its obligations. The trustees rigorously review costs to help identify any efficiencies in light of the current funding challenges.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Principal risks and uncertainties

As detailed above the trustees have a comprehensive risk management process to identify and monitor the risks faced by the academy trust. The key areas of risk have been categorised as: performance, reputation, financial and personnel-related. The principal risks and uncertainties are centred around changes in the level of funding from the ESFA. In addition, various members of staff belong to the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), which results in the recognition of a significant deficit on the academy trust's Balance Sheet, whilst other members of staff belong to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS), which is not recognised on the academy trust's Balance Sheet. The financial consequences and risks associated with these pension funds are explained further in note 1 of the financial statements.

The trustees have identified the following as the principal risks facing the academy trust:

Performance risk

- Maintaining good academic performance in all academies
- Consistency of rigorous and robust self-evaluation and focussed planning
- Supporting individual academies by using central trust resources for greatest impact
- Ensuring consistency and stability of leadership across all individual academies

Reputation risk

- Maintaining the "Outstanding" Ofsted judgements for Hall Mead School and both Ardleigh Green School's
- Continued improvement in pupil outcomes at Bower Park to underpin its "Good" judgement
- Building strong, honest and open relationships with the academy trust's key stakeholders
- Delivering the goals set out for the Havering Teacher Training Partnership
- Maintaining access to latest advice and professional development through "Going 4 Great" network, Leading Edge network, Teaching School Hub network and Havering Learning Partnership

Financial risk

- Strategically and proactively managing pupil numbers
- Ensuring robust financial planning based on appropriate and reasonable assumptions
- Controlling costs in line with plans
- Proactively obtaining grants/funding from central or other sources

Personnel risk

- Maintaining highly effective professional development and appraisal systems that provide opportunity for improvement and advancement
- Ensuring there is a pipeline of talent and ensuring key staff are retained

School buildings' safety risk

- The academy trust has invested in a detailed 10 year condition survey for each school. The survey and resultant planned actions ensure that identified issues are tackled in a timely and efficient manner. A full planned preventative maintenance schedule is managed by the central estates team, a schedule that includes all statutory inspections and regulations.
- Funding for the above activities is drawn from capital grants but in addition, a certain amount of monetary resource is agreed with each Headteacher that is pooled to enable larger projects to take place, for instance, the trust commissioned an expanded play area at one primary school to accommodate increased roll and to provide specialist equipment for play.
- The academy trust Head of Estates has full oversight of the risk assessment process with training undertaken annually by senior site staff. The estate risk process was audited by the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) in 2023 with the trust achieving an overall 'blue' rating of best practice.

The academy trust has a strong risk management ethos underpinned by robust policies and systems that analyse, review and determine mitigation of risk in a systematic manner.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

STRATEGIC REPORT

Any material risks highlighted at any level of the academy trust are escalated to the appropriate level in order to put in place mitigation where possible. Incidents where incurred risk exceeds the academy trust's defined thresholds are brought to the attention of the trustees along with appropriate recommendations for corrective action.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRATEGIC REPORT

Future plans

The Empower Learning Academy Trust ("ELAT") has developed an aspirational three-year strategic plan, which commenced in September 2023 and is centred around the concept of "everyone grows":

- The academy trust, in terms of scale.
- Staff, through providing opportunities for personal and professional development, career opportunities and effective employee support.
- Pupils, through the delivery of innovative and imaginative curricula, consistently high standards of education, an inspiring careers provision, with an emphasis of developing confident, kind and impactful world citizens.
- Communities, by expanding the innovative community hub offer currently provided in both Ardleigh Green School's and providing a similar community support offer to all the communities in which the academy trust school's are located.

The academy trust will focus on delivering the following desired states over the course of the strategy:

Governance and leadership

- Deep leadership capacity at all levels of the academy trust, with a focus on developing from within, whilst recognising the benefits of external perspectives, be they national or international.
- Executive and non-executive leadership connected through a culture of "high collaboration", "high accountability" and "high trust" in the delivery of an outward facing, diverse, growth orientated and high-performance organisation.
- Growth driven by a compelling "why ELAT?" narrative that attracts and retains talent, new schools, and pupils.

Public benefit and civic duty

- A vibrant family support network, addressing the current and evolving needs of communities served by ELAT.
- Effective delivery supports community engagement, improves pupil outcomes and lies at the heart of the compelling "why ELAT?" narrative.

High quality inclusive education

- Excellence in teaching and learning is "a given", such that pushing boundaries through innovative and imaginative curriculums that develop global citizenship and health and wellbeing are the norm.
- A continuously evolving educational offer that meets the needs of the academy trust's increasingly diverse communities.

School improvement

- A culture of sustainable self-improvement is embedded, grounded in excellence from within and outside of the academy trust, and is cyclical, adaptable and systemic within our academies.
- Future leaders are identified, grown and supported through high-quality coaching programmes, effective peer support networks and toolkits for success.

Workforce

- Competitive advantage is driven through a compelling "why ELAT?" narrative, with the academy trust outperforming its peers in attracting and retaining talent in a highly challenging and competitive labour market
- A supportive and high expectation environment, that encourages people to grow in their role and support others to develop.

Finance and operations

- The academy trust successfully prepares and embeds an organisational structure and technology strategy that facilitates and manages the organic and acquisitive growth of the academy trust, whilst ensuring the organisation maintains its sustainable financial position.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Governing document

In accordance with the Articles of Association the academy trust has adopted a Scheme of Governance approved by the Secretary of State of the Department of Education. The Scheme of Governance specifies, amongst other things, the basis for admitting students to the academy trust, the catchment area from which the students are drawn, and that the curriculum should comply with the substance of the national curriculum.

Trustee Code

The trustees have adopted a Code of Practice and adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life as set out by the Nolan Committee. They have also set out a Financial Scheme of Delegations along with Financial Regulations to codify various matters for the better operation of the academy trust's business and within which they expressly reserve specified significant matters for their sole decision.

Trustee Board Committee

The trustees have established various Committees through which they conduct their functions. Membership of Committees is reviewed and determined annually. Committee appointments may include individuals who are not trustees. Committee attendance of trustees is laid out in a table in this report.

A brief overview of the Constitution and responsibilities of the principal Committees conducted by the trustees is given below. Other panels and working groups are formed as considered appropriate to deal with particular issues as they arise.

In addition to trustees, members of the Executive Leadership Team and other staff and advisors will attend trustee and Committee meetings as necessary. The trustee board Committee also meets annually with the Executive to develop, monitor and revise the strategic plan.

HR Committee

The HR Committee consists of at least three trustees and meets at least three times per year. It develops and evaluates strategy and policy relating to personnel matters within the academy trust and oversees the academy trust's deployment and management of its staff.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee consists of at least three trustees and meets at least four times per year. It oversees the strategic financial planning of the academy trust and the financial management of the operations. It also provides direction to the CEO and the Local Governance Committees on financial matters.

Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee consists of at least three trustees and meets at least two times a year. The work centres around ensuring the academy trust has effective systems of internal control and appropriate risk management strategies.

CEO Performance Management Committee

The CEO and COO PM Committee comprises of two trustees and is responsible for the Executive's annual appraisal and pay review. It is supported by a suitably qualified external consultant, or in the case of the COO, the CEO.

Local Governance Committees (LGCs)

Local Governance Committees are established in each academy (under normal circumstances) and consist of between 5 and 9 individuals (trustees would not normally sit on an LGC) who are collectively responsible for the strategic direction of each academy and its performance, as set out under the academy trust's scheme of delegation.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Charity constitution

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee with no share capital (registration number 07702119) and is an exempt charity.

As an exempt charity, it is not required to be registered with the Charity Commission but is regulated by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on behalf of the Department of Education. The academy trust's Memorandum and Articles of Association are the primary governing documents for the academy trust. The Articles of Association require there to be at least 3 members of the Company who are responsible for the statutory and constitutional affairs of the Company and for the appointment of trustees who are responsible for the oversight of the management of the academy trust.

Members' liability

Each member of the academy trust undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of it being wound up while they are a member, or within one year after they cease to be a member, such amount as may be required, not exceeding £10, for the debts and liabilities contracted before they cease to be a member.

Trustees' Indemnities

The trustees are directors of the charitable company for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 and trustees for the purposes of charities legislation, and as such are responsible for all aspects of the operations of the academy trust.

The Articles of Association include provisions for the indemnification of trustees in respect of their actions in connection with the academy trust. The academy trust has put in place trustees and officers' insurance for the benefit of the trustees and other officers of the academy trust.

Principal activities

The principal object and activity of the charitable company is the provision of education for children of all ages in and around the London Borough of Havering.

Recruitment and appointment or election of trustees

The recruitment and appointment of trustees is undertaken to ensure the academy trust has the balance of skills, knowledge and experience necessary to effectively operate the academy trust. An annual skills audit of the trustees is undertaken, and gaps identified and addressed through recruitment or training. The academy trust considers succession planning on an ongoing basis.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Organisational structure

The academy trust's governance structure consists of the board of trustees and its sub-Committees which include individual academy dedicated Local Governance Committees (LGCs). The executive management is led by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), and is made up of the Executive Leadership Team. The aim of the management structure is to devolve responsibility to the most effective tier of the organisation so that it is efficient and effective.

Trustees are responsible for setting the strategic direction of the academy trust, challenging and supporting the Executive Leadership Team and overseeing the financial performance of the academy trust.

The CEO, who is also the Accounting Officer, is responsible to the trustees for the overall performance of the academy trust including the performance of each academy and the financial wellbeing of the academy trust.

Local Governance Committees are responsible for the strategic direction of the relevant academy over which they sit and in holding the relevant Headteacher/Principal to account for the performance of that academy.

Headteacher/Principals are responsible for the overall performance of the academy they lead and for meeting the objectives set for them by the academy trust, CEO and the LGC.

The Executive Leadership Team comprises the CEO, the Chief Operating Officer, Director of Academy Improvement and the Headteachers/Principals of the individual academies. Collectively, led by the CEO, these managers run the academy trust, implementing strategy and policy as laid down by the trustees.

Meeting protocol

During the course of 2023, board of trustee meetings, LGC Committee meetings and Members meetings were conducted in person as opposed to the previous hybrid approach during Covid. Clerking and governance arrangements remained in place.

Induction and training of new trustees and governors

Induction is tailored specifically to meet the needs of any new trustee and will be determined by the trustee's own knowledge and experience. Where necessary induction will provide training on charity and educational, legal and financial matters. Trustees have access to web-based and traditional training. The 2023 ELAT Governance handbook provides a comprehensive view of the academy trust's governance framework.

Key Management remuneration

The CEO Performance Management Committee, which comprises the Chair and Vice-Chair of trustees and an external, independent, consultant is responsible for setting the pay and remuneration of the Key Management.

Trade Union facility time

This information is published in accordance with the provisions of the Trade Union (Facility Time Publication Requirements) Regulations 2017 because the academy trust had a full-time equivalent employee number of more than 49 throughout the entirety of any seven of the months within the year ended 31 August 2023.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Relevant union officials

Number of employees who were relevant union officials during the relevant period	Full-time equivalent employee number
4	4

Percentage of time spent on facility time

Percentage of time	Number of employees
0%	Nil
1-50%	4
51-99%	Nil
100%	Nil

Percentage of pay bill spent on facility time

	£
Total cost of facility time	2,498
Total pay bill	1,841,692

Percentage of the total pay bill spent on facility time calculated as:

$$(\text{total cost of facility time} \div \text{total pay bill}) \times 100 \quad 0.14\%$$

Paid trade union activities

Time spent on paid trade union activities as a percentage of total paid facility time hours calculated as:

$$(\text{total hours spent on paid trade union activities by relevant union officials during the relevant period} \div \text{total paid facility time hours}) \times 100 \quad 0.01\%$$

Related parties

The academy trust manages the Havering Teacher Training Partnership which administers the training of new secondary teachers in Havering schools. The funding for this partnership is provided by the ESFA separately to the funding for academy trust. The activities of the Havering Teacher Training Partnership are not included in these financial statements.

Engagement with employees

The academy trust values inform everything the academy trust does. Inclusion is one of the values and actions are taken to ensure our staff are well informed, consulted and involved in all aspects of academy and trust life. Regular newsletters, Headteacher briefings and access to trustees are all part of this approach. The free to use online learning platform for all staff continues to see good take up with over 70% of staff in the year undertaking some training using that resource. The academy trust remains mindful of the wellbeing of its employees and has in place, at no cost to individuals, a programme of support for all employees and their families which provides, for example, access to a G.P, prescribing services and legal advice, further, the academy trust has signed up to the DiE Wellbeing charter.

Engagement with suppliers, customers and others

The academy trust has centralised many support functions and during the reporting period academy trust wide agreements for services have been reviewed and are promoted. In doing so, value for money and a closer working relationship with our partners is achieved.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

Risk management

The trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the academy trust is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

The trustees, together with the Executive Leadership Team, have assessed the major risks to which the academy trust is exposed. The trustees have ensured that systems exist to assess and where possible mitigate risk. Where significant financial risk still remains the trustees have, where deemed appropriate, put in place insurance cover. Trustees have also ensured that the academy trust has an effective system of internal financial controls.

STREAMLINED ENERGY AND CARBON REPORTING

The academy trust uses more than 40,000 KWh of energy per year and has more than 250 employees. The academy trust is therefore required to report its energy usage and associated greenhouse gas emissions relating to gas, electricity and transport fuel in the accounting period.

UK Greenhouse gas emissions and energy use data for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023

	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Energy consumption used to calculate emissions (kWh)	635,882	552,120	613,467
Scope 1 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e			
Gas consumption	513.2	438.5	634.1
Owned transport - mini-buses	1.1	1.5	2.2
Total Scope 1	523.5	440.0	636.3
Scope 2 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e			
Purchased electricity	306.0	219.7	306.0
Scope 3 emissions in metric tonnes CO ₂ e			
Business travel in employee owned vehicles	0.1	0.1	0.0
Total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e	829.6	659.8	942.3
Intensity ratio Tonnes CO₂e per pupil	0.2	0.2	0.3

Quantification and reporting methodology

The academy trust has followed the 2019 (updated June 2023) HM Government Environmental Reporting Guidelines, used the GHG Reporting Protocol - Corporate Standard, and the 2023 UK Government's Conversion Factors for Company Reporting.

Intensity measurement

The chosen intensity measurement ratio is total gross emissions in metric tonnes CO₂e per pupil, the recommended ratio for the sector.

Measures taken to improve energy efficiency

Recent efficiency measures installed are now fully functioning, however, comparisons with previous year are distorted by the addition of 2 further schools. The new schools have already been fitted with a 35KWh solar array (in August 2023).

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Report of the Trustees
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

STATEMENT AS TO DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION TO AUDITORS

So far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant information (as defined by Section 418 of the Companies Act 2006) of which the academy trust's auditors are unaware, and each trustee has taken all the steps that they ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make themselves aware of any audit information and to establish that the academy trust's auditors are aware of that information.

AUDITORS

The auditors, Cartwrights, will be proposed for re-appointment at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting.

In so far as the Board is aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the academy trust's auditor is unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have reasonably taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information pertinent to the audit and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information

Report of the trustees, incorporating the strategic report, approved by order of the Board of Trustees, as the company directors, on14/17/2023..... and signed on its behalf by:


.....
S London - Trustee

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

Scope of Responsibility

As trustees, we acknowledge we have overall responsibility for ensuring that the academy trust has an effective and appropriate system of control, financial and otherwise. However such a system is designed to manage rather than eliminate the risk of failure to achieve business objectives, and can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance against material misstatement or loss.

As trustees, we have reviewed and taken account of the guidance in DfE's Governance Handbook and competency framework for governance.

The board of trustees has delegated the day-to-day responsibility to the CEO, as accounting officer for ensuring financial controls conform with the requirements of both propriety and good financial management and in accordance with the requirements and responsibilities assigned to it in the funding agreement between the academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education. The CEO is also responsible for reporting to the board of trustees any material weaknesses or breakdown in internal control.

Governance

The information on governance included here supplements that described in the report of the trustees and in the statement of trustee's responsibilities. The board of trustees has formally met 7 times during the year. Attendance during the year at meetings was as follows:

Governor	Governor Type	Board of Trustees	HR Committee	Audit & Risk Committee	Finance Committee	Members' Meeting
A Farrow	Trustee*	5/7		2/2	4/6	
D Harries	Trustee	7/7	3/3		6/6	
D Forster	Member*					1/1
D Godwin	Trustee*	1/1	0/1			
J Brooks	Trustee	5/7	3/3		5/6	
J Sesli	Trustee**	5/5				
J Crossley	Member					0/0
J Asante	Trustee	0/2				
K Butcher	Trustee	7/7			6/6	
K Stewart	Trustee	7/7	3/3	1/2		
M Evans	Member					2/2
M Akinyosade	Trustee	1/2				
N Consterdine	Member**					1/1
P Reynolds	Member**	5/5	2/2			
S London	CEO/Trustee	7/7	3/3	2/2	6/6	
S McLaughlin	Member**					1/1
T Parson	Member*					1/1

(Figures above stated as meetings attended out of a possible. *denotes former member or trustee and ** denotes newly appointed member or trustee in the year).

The board of trustees manage conflicts of interest by maintaining an up-to date and complete register of interests. This is updated as appropriate at each committee meeting, where the trustees declare any possible conflicts of interest at the beginning of each meeting. The information contained on the register of interests is used as a reference point in day-to-day management and governance of the academy trust, for example when requesting tenders for capital projects and significant purchases, in an attempt to avoid any conflicts of interest.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

Review of Value for Money

As accounting officer, the chief executive officer has responsibility for ensuring that the academy trust delivers good value in the use of public resources. The accounting officer understands that value for money refers to the educational and wider societal outcomes achieved in return for the taxpayer resources received.

The accounting officer considers how the academy trust's use of its resources has provided good value for money during each academic year, and reports to the board of trustees with regard to various value for money matters, including the use of benchmarking data as a guide where appropriate.

Over the last financial year, the academy trust has taken a wide range of steps to ensure that the educational standards for all pupils have continued to improve.

Extensive planning and resources were put into 'Catch-Up' and student support programmes, with internal data showing significant gains in reading ages. 'Catch-Up' audits showed evidential gains in knowledge and improved outcomes against predicted results in GCSEs and end of Key Stage assessments.

In this last year, all academies implemented their revised curriculum offers so as to ensure they continue to deliver a broad and balanced, appropriately sequenced and challenging education for all our pupils, consciously supporting non-core subjects and co-curricular experiences so as to re-engage pupils with in-person learning and match their interests and skills. The co-curricular experiences have been reviewed and adapted so as to ensure value for money and access for all.

During the year, there was a review of senior leadership structures and implementation of the academy trust's Talent Management and Succession Plans, so as to ensure smooth and efficient transitions to new leadership teams within 3 of its academies and to enable the CEO not to have to undertake the dual role of a Headteacher as well as CEO, reflecting the need to increase executive capacity now the academy trust has grown. The academy trust continued to make intelligent use of its central academy improvement team, revising roles, incorporating new, experienced practitioners and moving staff around to fill gaps and accelerate school improvement.

The continued development of the academy trust's central services team and the streamlining of some processes have also led to efficiencies.

Each academy within the academy trust has produced a detailed analysis of how the Pupil Premium funding was spent and the impact that that funding had for individual pupils. These reports are available on the relevant academy's website. Similarly, the use of funding for catch up groups for pupils is managed and reported in the same way.

The improvement agenda is clearly outlined within the strategic plan of the academy trust and in each school's academy improvement plan (AIP). The academy trust has focussed on targeted improvement both academy trust wide (such as the curriculum review) and at individual academy and subject level through the AIPs and trust wide subject networks.

Improvement activity and impact are reviewed annually by the board of trustees on its strategic planning day, as well as through regular progress updates at board of trustee meetings.

The strategic plan includes a strand about a supportive culture centred around high expectations that delivers an outstanding quality of education and a strand on refreshing teaching and learning. The talent management programme, bespoke CPD and succession planning along with the support provided to develop subject specific teaching are delivering better outcomes for pupils. The academy trust has also made increasing use of cross-trust leadership models and the sharing/voluntary transfer of teaching staff throughout the organisation. These changes are designed to maximise the in-school offer whilst ensuring costs are controlled and, where necessary, reduced.

Hall Mead School is a National Support School and the CEO is a National Leader of Education. School to school support work within this programme has had a demonstrable impact.

The academy trust has a strong financial oversight with significant relevant expertise within the Finance Committee.

The academy trust benchmarks its cost base for each academy both internally and externally, where possible.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

The academy trust has benefitted from its collective buying power with cost reductions being evident across many services, but particularly staff recruitment, energy costs and support services.

The academy trust has been able to access various additional sources of funding to support school improvement and develop the estate. At the close of the year Hall Mead School finally moved into its new build main school building and Bower Park Academy constructed its new science labs. Trustees have tasked the COO to continue to access further funding over the next few years in order to provide a better teaching and learning environment.

The academy trust has internal controls in place to ensure strict financial procedures are followed. A programme of internal audit provides reassurance that systems are being adhered to. The Finance Committee receive regular reports showing actual costs versus budget with appropriate narrative describing differences and corrective plans. Tight controls around the ordering of goods and services ensure the best use of resources and the prevention of waste. Surplus cash is deposited with appropriate financial institutions.

The Purpose of the System of Internal Control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives. It can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of academy trust policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in the academy trust for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements.

Capacity to Handle Risk

The board of trustees has reviewed the key risks to which the academy trust is exposed together with the operating, financial and compliance controls that have been implemented to mitigate those risks. The board of trustees is of the view that there is a formal on-going process for identifying, evaluating and managing the academy trust's significant risks that has been in place for the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 and up to the date of approval of the annual report and financial statements. This process is regularly reviewed by the board of trustees.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Governance Statement for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

The Risk and Control Framework

The board of trustees oversees a programme of internal audit. In addition, the trustees have put in place procedures and internal controls around the management of risk, covering:

- The types of risks the academy trust faces
- The level of net risk which is regarded acceptable
- The likelihood of the risks materialising
- The ability to reduce the incidence and impact of specific risks
- The costs of operating particular controls relative to the benefits obtained
- The responsibility of the Executive Leadership Team to implement the academy trust's policies and to identify and evaluate risks for the board or trustee's consideration
- The embedding of control system in the academy trust's operations so that they become part of the culture of the academy trust
- The development of systems to respond quickly to evolving risks arising from factors within the academy trust and to changes in the external environment; and
- Procedures for reporting failings of risk management strategies immediately to appropriate levels of management and to trustees together with details of corrective action being undertaken

These arrangements can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions are authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected within a timely period.

The internal auditor's role includes giving advice on financial matters and performing a range of checks on the academy trust's financial systems. In particular, the checks carried out in the current period included:

- Testing of payroll systems
- Testing of purchase systems
- Testing of control account/bank reconciliations
- Petty cash
- Credit card expenditure
- Monitoring of debts
- Verifying gross pay

Following every review, the internal auditor reports to the Risk and Audit Committee and the Finance Committee on the operation of the systems of control and on the discharge of the trustee's financial responsibilities.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Governance Statement
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

Review of Effectiveness

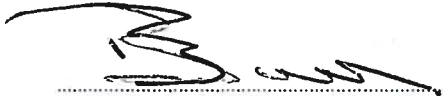
As Accounting Officer the CEO has responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the systems of internal control. During the year the review has been informed by:

- The work of the internal auditor
- The work of the external auditor; and
- The financial management and governance self-assessment process or the school resource management self-assessment tool; and;
- The work of the Executive Leadership Team within the academy trust who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework.

The Accounting Officer found nothing to indicate any material failures or weaknesses from the work undertaken in the year on the effectiveness of systems of internal control. Additionally, there were no weaknesses advised by either the Internal or External Auditor that were not addressed within the current year.

The Accounting Officer has been advised of the outcomes of reviews of the systems of internal controls as presented to the Risk and Audit Committee and the Finance Committee during the year and is aware of all plans to address weaknesses and to ensure continuous improvement of the systems.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 14/12/2023 and signed on its behalf by:



K Butcher - Trustee



S London - Accounting Officer

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Statement on Regularity, Propriety and Compliance
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

As accounting officer of Empower Learning Academy Trust I have considered my responsibility to notify the academy trust board of trustees and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) of material irregularity, impropriety and non-compliance with terms and conditions of all funding, including for estates safety and management, under the funding agreement between the academy trust and the Secretary of State for Education. As part of my consideration I have had due regard to the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022, including responsibilities for estates safety and management.

I confirm that I and the academy trust board of trustees are able to identify any material irregular or improper use of funds by the academy trust, or material non-compliance with the terms and conditions of funding under the academy trust's funding agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook 2022.

I confirm that no instances of material irregularity, impropriety or funding non-compliance have been discovered to date. If any instances are identified after the date of this statement, these will be notified to the board of trustees and ESFA.


.....
London - Accounting Officer

Date: 14/12/23

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

The trustees (who act as governors of Empower Learning Academy Trust and are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Report of the Trustees and the financial statements in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP 2019 and the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards (FRS 102) have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for ensuring that in its conduct and operation the charitable company applies financial and other controls, which conform with the requirements both of propriety and of good financial management. They are also responsible for ensuring grants received from the ESFA/DfE have been applied for the purposes intended.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from other legislation other jurisdictions.

Approved by order of the members of the Board of Trustees on 14/12/2023 and signed on its behalf by:


.....

S London - Trustee

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Empower Learning Academy Trust

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of Empower Learning Academy Trust (the 'academy trust') for the year ended 31 August 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Balance Sheet, the Cash Flow Statement and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law, United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) and the Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the academy trust's affairs as at 31 August 2023 and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice;
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP 2019 and Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the academy trust in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our Report of the Independent Auditors thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Report of the Trustees for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Report of the Trustees has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

**Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of
Empower Learning Academy Trust**

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the academy trust and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Report of the Trustees.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate accounting records have not been kept or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the academy trust or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of Empower Learning Academy Trust

Our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue a Report of the Independent Auditors that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud is detailed below:

The extent to which the audit was considered capable of detecting irregularities including fraud

We ensured that the engagement team collectively had the appropriate competence, capabilities and skills to identify or recognise non-compliance with applicable laws and regulations, and that they remained alert to instances of non-compliance throughout the audit.

Our approach to identifying and assessing the risks of material misstatement in respect of irregularities, including fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations, was as follows:

- based on our understanding of the company and industry, and through discussions with directors and key management, we identified any specific laws and regulations which we considered may have a direct material effect on the financial statements or the operations of the company, including the Companies Act 2006, taxation legislation and data protection, anti-bribery, employment, environmental and health and safety legislation; and
- we assessed the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations through making enquiries of management and inspecting legal correspondence.

We assessed the susceptibility of the company's financial statements to material misstatement, including obtaining an understanding of how fraud might occur, by:

- making enquiries of management as to where they considered there was susceptibility to fraud, their knowledge of actual, suspected and alleged fraud; and
- considering the internal controls in place to mitigate risks of fraud and non-compliance with laws and regulations.

To address the risk of fraud through management bias and override of controls, we:

- performed analytical procedures to identify any unusual or unexpected relationships;
- tested journal entries, particularly focused around the year-end, to identify unusual transactions;
- assessed whether judgements and assumptions made in determining the accounting estimates in the notes to the financial statements were indicative of potential bias; and
- investigated the rationale behind significant or unusual transactions.

In response to the risk of irregularities and non-compliance with laws and regulations, we designed procedures which included, but were not limited to:

- agreeing financial statement disclosures to underlying supporting documentation;
- reading the minutes of meetings of those charged with governance;
- enquiring of management as to actual and potential litigation and claims; and
- reviewing correspondence with HMRC, relevant regulators and the company's legal advisors.

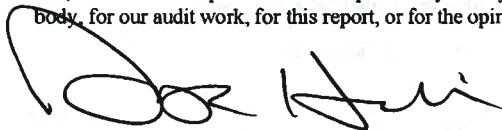
There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above. We are less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations that are not closely related to events and transactions reflected in the financial statements. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

**Report of the Independent Auditors to the Members of
Empower Learning Academy Trust**

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our Report of the Independent Auditors.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the academy trust's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the academy trust's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditors' report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the academy trust and the academy trust's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Andy Hill FCA (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Cartwrights
Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors
Statutory Auditor
Regency House
33 Wood Street
Barnet
Hertfordshire
EN5 4BE

Date: 15/12/2023

**Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to
Empower Learning Academy Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency**

In accordance with the terms of our engagement and further to the requirements of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), as included in the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023, we have carried out an engagement to obtain limited assurance about whether the expenditure disbursed and income received by Empower Learning Academy Trust during the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have been applied to the purposes identified by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

This report is made solely to Empower Learning Academy Trust and the ESFA in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to Empower Learning Academy Trust and the ESFA those matters we are required to state in a report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than Empower Learning Academy Trust and the ESFA, for our work, for this report, or for the conclusion we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of Empower Learning Academy Trust's accounting officer and the reporting accountant

The accounting officer is responsible, under the requirements of Empower Learning Academy Trust's funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education and the Academy Trust Handbook, extant from 1 September 2022, for ensuring that expenditure disbursed and income received is applied for the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

Our responsibilities for this engagement are established in the United Kingdom by our profession's ethical guidance and are to obtain limited assurance and report in accordance with our engagement letter and the requirements of the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023. We report to you whether anything has come to our attention in carrying out our work which suggests that in all material respects, expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 have not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament or that the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.

Approach

We conducted our engagement in accordance with the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the ESFA. We performed a limited assurance engagement as defined in our engagement letter.

The objective of a limited assurance engagement is to perform such procedures as to obtain information and explanations in order to provide us with sufficient appropriate evidence to express a negative conclusion on regularity.

A limited assurance engagement is more limited in scope than a reasonable assurance engagement and consequently does not enable us to obtain assurance that we would become aware of all significant matters that might be identified in a reasonable assurance engagement. Accordingly, we do not express a positive opinion.

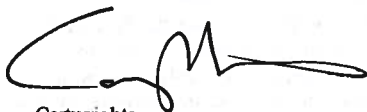
Our engagement includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the regularity and propriety of the academy trust's income and expenditure. The work undertaken to draw our conclusions includes:

- Reviewing the minutes of meetings of the Trustees and other evidence made available to us;
- Reviewing the objectives and activities of the academy trust;
- Testing a sample of payroll payments to staff and payments made to suppliers and other third parties;
- Testing a sample of grants received and other income streams, and;
- Evaluating the internal control procedures and reporting lines of the academy trust, and testing as appropriate.

**Independent Reporting Accountant's Assurance Report on Regularity to
Empower Learning Academy Trust and the Education and Skills Funding Agency**

Conclusion

In the course of our work, nothing has come to our attention which suggests that in all material respects the expenditure disbursed and income received during the period 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2023 has not been applied to purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions do not conform to the authorities which govern them.



Cartwrights
Chartered Accountants and Business Advisors
Reporting Accountant
Regency House
33 Wood Street
Barnet
Hertfordshire
EN5 4BE

Date: 15/12/2023

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

				31/8/23	31/8/22	
	Notes	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Restricted fixed asset funds £	Total funds £	Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS FROM						
Donations and capital grants	3	98,856	-	601,935	700,791	646,608
Transfer from Local Authority on conversion		-	(569,754)	13,165,000	12,595,246	-
Charitable activities						
Funding for the academy's educational operations	4	-	27,627,336	-	27,627,336	22,959,044
Other trading activities	5	605,920	-	-	605,920	329,579
Investment income	6	1,457	1	-	1,458	845
Total		<u>706,233</u>	<u>27,057,583</u>	<u>13,766,935</u>	<u>41,530,751</u>	<u>23,936,076</u>
EXPENDITURE ON						
Charitable activities						
Academy's educational operations	8	508,714	28,368,763	1,828,040	30,705,517	26,028,372
Total		<u>508,714</u>	<u>28,368,763</u>	<u>1,828,040</u>	<u>30,705,517</u>	<u>26,028,372</u>
NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE)						
Transfers between funds	19	197,519	(1,311,180)	11,938,895	10,825,234	(2,092,296)
Other recognised gains/(losses)		-	(415,908)	415,908	-	-
Actuarial gains on defined benefit schemes		-	1,983,000	-	1,983,000	11,229,000
Net movement in funds		197,519	255,912	12,354,803	12,808,234	9,136,704
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS						
Total funds brought forward		2,056,310	(3,697,423)	83,254,508	81,613,395	72,476,691
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD		<u><u>2,253,829</u></u>	<u><u>(3,441,511)</u></u>	<u><u>95,609,311</u></u>	<u><u>94,421,629</u></u>	<u><u>81,613,395</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust**Balance Sheet
31 August 2023**

		31/8/23	31/8/22
	Notes	£	£
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	15	95,609,310	83,254,508
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	16	635,047	654,566
Cash at bank and in hand		1,588,902	2,347,432
		<u>2,223,949</u>	<u>3,001,998</u>
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	17	(2,815,630)	(2,705,111)
		<u>(591,681)</u>	<u>296,887</u>
NET CURRENT ASSETS			
		<u>(591,681)</u>	<u>296,887</u>
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		95,017,629	83,551,395
PENSION LIABILITY	20	(596,000)	(1,938,000)
		<u>94,421,629</u>	<u>81,613,395</u>
NET ASSETS		<u>94,421,629</u>	<u>81,613,395</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Balance Sheet - continued
31 August 2023**

FUNDS

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Restricted funds:

Restricted general funds	(2,845,511)	(1,759,423)
Restricted fixed assets funds	95,609,311	83,254,508
Restricted general funds - pension reserve	(596,000)	(1,938,000)
	<u>92,167,800</u>	<u>79,557,085</u>

Unrestricted funds:

Unrestricted income funds	<u>2,253,829</u>	<u>2,056,310</u>
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TOTAL FUNDS

<u>94,421,629</u>	<u>81,613,395</u>
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The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and authorised for issue on 14/12/23 and were signed on its behalf by:



.....
K Butcher - Trustee



.....
S London - Trustee

The notes form part of these financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

	Notes	31/8/23 £	31/8/22 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from operations	1	(465,696)	234,940
Net cash (used in)/provided by operating activities		<u>(465,696)</u>	<u>234,940</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets		(896,227)	(1,139,509)
Capital grants from DfE/EFA		601,935	572,696
Interest received		1,458	845
Net cash used in investing activities		<u>(292,834)</u>	<u>(565,968)</u>
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the reporting period		<u>(758,530)</u>	<u>(331,028)</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the reporting period		<u>2,347,432</u>	<u>2,678,460</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the reporting period		<u><u>1,588,902</u></u>	<u><u>2,347,432</u></u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Cash Flow Statement
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

1. RECONCILIATION OF NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Net income/(expenditure) for the reporting period (as per the Statement of Financial Activities)	10,825,234	(2,092,296)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation charges	1,706,427	981,036
Capital grants from DfE/ESFA	(601,935)	(572,696)
Transfer from Local Authority on conversion	(12,595,246)	-
Interest received	(1,458)	(845)
Pension scheme cost less contributions	230,000	1,361,000
Pension scheme finance cost	97,000	203,000
Pension charge and cash contributions	1,385,000	-
Transfer from LA on conversion	(255,756)	-
Decrease in debtors	19,519	1,371,615
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	110,519	(1,015,874)
Difference between pension charge and cash contributions	(1,385,000)	-
Net cash (used in)/provided by operations	<u>(465,696)</u>	<u>234,940</u>

2. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

	At 1/9/22	Cash flow	At 31/8/23
	£	£	£
Net cash			
Cash at bank and in hand	2,347,432	(758,530)	1,588,902
	<u>2,347,432</u>	<u>(758,530)</u>	<u>1,588,902</u>
Total	<u>2,347,432</u>	<u>(758,530)</u>	<u>1,588,902</u>

The notes form part of these financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Basis of preparing the financial statements

The financial statements of the academy trust, which is a public benefit entity under FRS 102, have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) 'Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)', Financial Reporting Standard 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland', the Academies Accounts Direction 2022 to 2023 issued by the ESFA, the Charities Act 2011 and the Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention, as modified by the revaluation of certain assets.

Empower Learning Academy Trust meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

Going concern

The trustees assess whether the use of the going concern assumption is appropriate, i.e. whether there are any material uncertainties related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the ability of the academy trust to continue as a going concern. The trustees make this assessment in respect of a period of at least one year from the date of authorisation for issue of the financial statements and have concluded that the academy trust has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future and there are no material uncertainties about the academy trust's ability to continue as a going concern, thus they continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities once the academy trust has entitlement to the funds, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Grants

Grants are included in the Statement of Financial Activities on a receivable basis. The balance of income received for specific purposes but not expended during the period is shown in the relevant funds on the balance sheet. Where income is received in advance of meeting any performance-related conditions, there is not unconditional entitlement to the income and its recognition is deferred and included in creditors as deferred income until the performance-related conditions are met. Where entitlement occurs before income is received, the income is accrued.

The General Annual Grant is recognised in full in the Statement of Financial Activities in the year for which it is receivable and any abatement in respect of the period is deducted from income and recognised as a liability.

Capital grants are recognised in full where there is unconditional entitlement to the grant. In the event that unconditional entitlement passes to the academy trust whilst the project is incomplete, the expenditure is capitalised in assets under construction. Unspent amounts of capital grants are reflected in the balance sheet in the restricted fixed asset fund. Capital grants are not deferred over the life of the asset on which they are expended.

Where the academy trust benefits from ESFA's Priority Schools Building Programme, the funding for the programme is not recognised as a capital grant until there is unconditional entitlement from costs being incurred, and the development is occurring on a site where the academy trust controls through ownership, lease or licence. Expenditure is capitalised in assets under construction until the project is complete.

Sponsorship income

Sponsorship income provided to the academy trust which amounts to a donation is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable (where there are no performance-related conditions), where it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Donations

Donations are recognised on a receivable basis where there are no performance related conditions and where it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

Other income

Other income including the hire of facilities, is recognised in the period it is receivable and to the extent the academy trust has provided the goods or services.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the academy trust. This is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank.

Donated goods, facilities and services

Goods donated for resale are included at fair value, being the expected proceeds from sale less the expected costs of sale. If it is practical to assess the fair value at receipt, it is recognised in stock and 'Income from other trading activities'. Upon sale, the value of the stock is charged against 'Income from other trading activities' and the proceeds are recognised as 'Income from other trading activities'. Where it is impractical to fair value the items due to the volume of low value items they are not recognised in the financial statements until they are sold. This income is recognised within 'Income from other trading activities'.

Donated fixed assets (excluding transfers on conversion/into the academy)

Where the donated good is a fixed asset it is measured at fair value, unless it is impractical to measure this reliably, in which case the cost of the item to the donor should be used. The gain is recognised as income from donations and a corresponding amount is included in the appropriate fixed asset category and depreciated over the useful economic life in accordance with the academy trust's accounting policies.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to transfer economic benefit to a third party, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefits will be required in settlement and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified by activity. The costs of each activity are made up of the total of direct costs and shared costs, including support costs involved in undertaking each activity. Direct costs attributable to a single activity are allocated directly to that activity. Shared costs which contribute to more than one activity and support costs which are not attributable to a single activity are apportioned between those activities on a basis consistent with the use of resources. Central staff costs are allocated on the basis of time spent, and depreciation charges allocated on the portion of the asset's use.

All resources expended are inclusive of irrecoverable VAT.

Expenditure on charitable activities

Costs of charitable activities are incurred on the academy trust's educational operations, including support costs and costs relating to the governance of the academy trust apportioned to charitable activities.

Intangible fixed assets

Intangible assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised and recognised when future economic benefits are probable and the cost or value of the asset can be measured reliably. Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost and are subsequently measured at cost net of amortisation and any provision for impairment.

Amortisation is provided on intangible fixed assets at rates calculated to write off the cost of each asset on a straight-line basis over its expected useful life, as follows:

Software development costs - 3 years straight line

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Tangible fixed assets

All assets costing £1,000 or more are capitalised as tangible fixed assets and are carried at cost, net of depreciation and any provision for impairment.

Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with the aid of specific grants, either from the government or from the private sector, they are included in the balance sheet at cost and depreciated over their expected useful economic life. Where there are specific conditions attached to the funding required the continued use of the asset, the related grants are credited to a restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities and carried forward in the balance sheet. Depreciation on the relevant assets is charged directly to the restricted fixed asset fund in the Statement of Financial Activities. Where tangible fixed assets have been acquired with unrestricted funds, a transfer is made to reflect these assets in the restricted fixed asset fund.

Depreciation is provided on all tangible assets other than freehold land and assets under construction, at rates calculated to write off the cost of fixed assets, less their estimated residual value, over their expected useful lives as follows:

Freehold and leasehold property	- 50 years straight line
Furniture, fittings and equipment	- 5 or 10 years straight line
Motor vehicles	- 10 years straight line
Computer equipment	- 3 years straight line

Assets in the course of construction are included at cost. Depreciation on these assets is not charged until they are brought into use and reclassified to freehold or leasehold land and buildings.

A review for impairment of a fixed asset is carried out if events or changes in circumstances indicate that the carrying value of any fixed asset may not be recoverable. Shortfalls between the carrying value of fixed assets and their recoverable amounts are recognised as impairments. Impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Financial instruments

The academy trust only holds basic financial instruments as defined in FRS 102. The financial assets and financial liabilities of the academy trust and their measurement basis are as follows:

Financial assets - trade and other debtors are basic financial instruments and are debt instruments measured at amortised cost as detailed in the debtors note to these financial statements. Prepayments are not financial instruments. Amounts due to the charity's wholly owned subsidiary are held at face value less any impairment.

Cash at bank - is classified as a basic financial instrument and is measured at face value.

Financial liabilities - trade creditors, accruals and other creditors are financial instruments, and are measured at amortised cost as detailed in the creditors note to these financial statements. Taxation and social security are not included in the financial instruments disclosure definition. Deferred income is not deemed to be a financial liability, as the cash settlement has already taken place and there is an obligation to deliver services rather than cash or another financial instrument. Amounts due to charity's wholly owned subsidiary are held at face value less any impairment.

Taxation

The academy trust is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

The academy trust is considered to pass the tests set out in Paragraph 1 Schedule 6 of the Finance Act 2010 and therefore it meets the definition of a charitable company for UK corporation tax purposes.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Taxation

Accordingly, the academy trust is potentially exempt from taxation in respect of income or capital gains received within categories covered by part 11, chapter 3 of the Corporation Tax Act 2010 or Section 256 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992, to the extent that such income or gains are applied exclusively to charitable purposes.

The hire of facilities is classified as a charitable activity under the academy trust's objects and therefore such income is exempt from corporation tax.

Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted general funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the academy trust. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes and include grants from the Department for Education, other sources and the fund that represents the LGPS obligation.

Restricted fixed asset funds are resources which are to be applied to specific capital purposes imposed by the Department for Education where the asset acquired or created is held for a specific purpose.

Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

Retirement benefits to employees of the academy trust are provided by the Teachers' Pension Scheme ("TPS") and the Local Government Pension Scheme ("LGPS"). These are defined benefit schemes and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme and contributions are calculated to spread the cost of pensions over employees' working lives with the academy trust in such a way that the pension cost is a substantially level percentage of current and future pensionable payroll. The contributions are determined by the Government Actuary based on quadrennial valuations using a prospective unit credit method. TPS is an unfunded multi-employer scheme with no underlying assets to assign between employers. Consequently, the TPS is treated as a defined contribution scheme for accounting purposes and the contributions recognised in the period to which they relate.

The LGPS is a funded multi-employer scheme and the assets are held separately from those of the academy trust in separate trustee administered funds. Pension scheme assets are measured at fair value and liabilities are measured on an actuarial basis using the projected unit credit method and discounted at a rate equivalent to the current rate of return on a high quality corporate bond of equivalent term and currency to the liabilities. The actuarial valuations are obtained at least triennially and are updated at each balance sheet date. The amounts charged to net income/(expenditure) are the current service costs and the costs of scheme introductions, benefit changes, settlements and curtailments. They are included as part of staff costs as incurred. Net interest on the net defined benefit liability/asset is also recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities and comprises the interest cost on the defined benefit obligation and interest income on the scheme assets, calculated by multiplying the fair value of the scheme assets at the beginning of the period by the rate used to discount the benefit obligations. The difference between the interest income on the scheme assets and the actual return on the scheme assets is recognised in other recognised gains and losses.

Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in other recognised gains and losses.

Conversion to an academy

On 1 December 2022 Ardleigh Green Infant School and Ardleigh Green Primary School were transferred into the trust on conversion to academy status.

The conversion from a state maintained school to an academy trust involved the transfer of identifiable assets and liabilities and the operation of the school for £nil consideration. The substance of the transfer is that of a gift and it has been accounted for on that basis as set out below.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES - continued

Conversion to an academy

The assets and liabilities transferred on conversion from Ardleigh Green Infant School and Ardleigh Green Primary School to the academy trust have been valued at their fair value. The fair value has been derived based on that of equivalent items. The amounts have been recognised under the appropriate balance sheet categories, with a corresponding amount recognised in charitable activities - transfer from local authority on conversion in the statement of financial activities and analysed under restricted general funds and restricted fixed asset funds.

The assets and liabilities were transferred in at fair values as follows:

	Value reported by transferee £	Fair value adjustments £	Transfer in recognised £
Tangible fixed assets - land	8,918,000	-	8,918,000
Tangible fixed assets - leasehold buildings	4,247,000	-	4,247,000
Deficit on conversion	(255,754)	-	(255,754)
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	(314,000)	-	(314,000)
Net Assets	12,595,246	-	12,595,246

No furniture or computer equipment was included in the transfer statement on conversion to academy status. These assets had been expended directly by the school, rather than the Local Authority, prior to transfer. As these assets had a "nil cost" to the academy, they have not been capitalised on conversion.

Other balance sheet items

Debtors are recognised when the academy trust is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met, the amount can be measured reliably and it is probable that the income will be received.

Creditors are recognised when the academy trust has a present legal or constructive obligation resulting from a past event and the settlement is expected to result in an outflow of economic benefits.

Cash at bank and in hand included cash and short term highly liquid investments with a short maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition or opening of the deposit or similar account.

Liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the balance sheet date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement, and the amount of the settlement can be estimated reliably. Liabilities are recognised at the amount that the academy trust anticipates it will pay to settle the debt or the amount it has received as advanced payments for the goods or services it must provide.

Provisions are recognised when the academy trust has an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event which it is probable will result in the transfer of economic benefits and the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Provisions are measured at the best estimate of the amounts required to settle the obligation. Where the effect of the time value of money is material, the provision is based on the present value of those amounts, discounted at the pre-tax discount rate that reflects the risks specific to the liability. The unwinding of the discount is recognised within interest payable and similar charges.

Rentals under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

2. CRITICAL ACCOUNTING JUDGEMENTS AND KEY SOURCES OF ESTIMATION UNCERTAINTY

Estimates and judgements are continually evaluated and are based on historical experience and other factors, including expectations of future events that are believed to be reasonable under the circumstances.

The academy trust makes estimates and assumptions concerning the future. The resulting accounting estimates and assumptions will, by definition, seldom equal the related actual results. The estimates and assumptions that have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amounts of assets and liabilities within the next financial year are discussed below:

Property, plant and equipment

Tangible fixed assets are depreciated over their useful lives taking into accounts residual value, where appropriate. The actual lives of the assets and residual values are assessed annually and may vary depending on a number of factors. Residual value assessments consider issues such as the remaining life of the asset and projected disposal values.

Pension scheme obligations

The present value of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) defined liability depends on a number of factors that are determined on an actuarial basis using a variety of assumptions. The assumptions used in determining the net cost (income) for pensions include the discount rate. Any changes in these assumptions, which are disclosed in the pensions and similar obligations note to these financial statements, will impact the carrying amount of pension liability. Furthermore a roll forward approach which projects results from the latest full actuarial valuation performed at 31 March 2019 has been used by an actuary in valuing the pensions liability at 31 August 2022. Any differences between the figures derived from the roll forward approach and a full actuarial valuation would impact on the carrying amount of the pension liability.

3. DONATIONS AND CAPITAL GRANTS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
Donations	98,856	-	98,856	73,912
Capital grants	-	601,935	601,935	572,696
	<u>98,856</u>	<u>601,935</u>	<u>700,791</u>	<u>646,608</u>

Grants received, included in the above, are as follows:

	31/8/23 £	31/8/22 £
General Annual Grant(GAG)	243,388	-
Other DfE/EFSA grants	358,547	-
Other grants	-	572,696
	<u>601,935</u>	<u>572,696</u>

There are no unfulfilled obligations or other contingencies attached to the government grants above.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

4. FUNDING FOR THE ACADEMY TRUST'S EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
DfE/ESFA grant				
General Annual Grant(GAG)	-	21,540,415	21,540,415	18,616,565
Other income from the academy trust's educational operations	-	6,086,921	6,086,921	4,342,479
	<u>-</u>	<u>27,627,336</u>	<u>27,627,336</u>	<u>22,959,044</u>

There are no unfulfilled obligations or other contingencies attached to the government grants above.

5. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
Hire of facilities	187,442	-	187,442	148,495
Other self generated income	418,478	-	418,478	181,084
	<u>605,920</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>605,920</u>	<u>329,579</u>

6. INVESTMENT INCOME

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
Deposit account interest	1,457	1	1,458	845
	<u>1,457</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1,458</u>	<u>845</u>

7. EXPENDITURE

	Non-pay expenditure			31/8/23	31/8/22
	Staff costs £	Premises £	Other costs £	Total £	Total £
Charitable activities					
Academy's educational operations					
Direct costs	19,686,580	-	1,775,670	21,462,250	17,421,231
Allocated support costs	4,954,541	2,168,941	2,119,785	9,243,267	8,607,141
	<u>24,641,121</u>	<u>2,168,941</u>	<u>3,895,455</u>	<u>30,705,517</u>	<u>26,028,372</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

7. EXPENDITURE - continued

Net income/(expenditure) is stated after charging/(crediting):

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Auditors' remuneration	46,039	42,710
Depreciation - owned assets	1,706,425	981,037
	<u>1,752,464</u>	<u>1,023,747</u>

Auditors' remuneration includes both internal and external audit services, provided by separate firms.

There were no compensation or ex-gratia payments in the year (2022: £nil).

8. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES - ACADEMY'S EDUCATIONAL OPERATIONS

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
Direct costs	98,441	21,363,809	21,462,250	17,421,231
Support costs	410,273	8,832,994	9,243,267	8,607,141
	<u>508,714</u>	<u>30,196,803</u>	<u>30,705,517</u>	<u>26,028,372</u>

	31/8/23 Total £	31/8/22 Total £
Analysis of support costs		
Support staff costs	4,954,541	5,303,241
Depreciation	812,071	163,951
Technology costs	254,753	217,740
Premises costs	2,168,941	2,108,862
Other support costs	1,006,922	770,637
Governance costs	46,039	42,710
Total support costs	<u>9,243,267</u>	<u>8,607,141</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

9. SUPPORT COSTS

	Management	Other	Governance	Totals
	£	£	costs	£
	£	£	£	£
Academy's educational operations	<u>7,935,553</u>	<u>1,261,675</u>	<u>46,039</u>	<u>9,243,267</u>

Support costs, included in the above, are as follows:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	Academy's	Total
	educational	activities
	operations	£
	£	£
Wages	2,358,618	1,952,775
Social security	180,797	153,607
Pensions	1,615,000	2,327,000
LGPS pension finance cost	800,126	869,859
Maintenance of premises and equipment	1,274,585	1,291,777
Depreciation of tangible and heritage assets	1,706,427	981,036
Technology costs	254,753	217,740
Other costs	1,006,922	770,637
Auditors' remuneration	46,039	42,710
	<u>9,243,267</u>	<u>8,607,141</u>

10. STAFF COSTS

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Wages and salaries	17,412,147	14,040,831
Social security costs	1,713,364	1,419,184
Operating costs of defined benefit pension schemes	4,109,321	4,452,430
Apprenticeship levy	72,430	52,229
	<u>23,307,262</u>	<u>19,964,674</u>
Supply teacher costs	1,236,859	1,162,262
LGPS pension finance cost	97,000	203,000
	<u>24,641,121</u>	<u>21,329,936</u>

The average number of persons (including senior management team) employed by the academy trust during the year was as follows:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
Teachers	256	227
Administration and support	360	309
Management	2	2
	<u>618</u>	<u>538</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

10. STAFF COSTS - continued

The number of employees whose employee benefits (excluding employer pension costs) exceeded £60,000 was:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
£60,001 - £70,000	15	17
£70,001 - £80,000	8	5
£80,001 - £90,000	3	3
£90,001 - £100,000	1	2
£100,000 - £110,000	1	-
Over £110,000	1	1
	<u>29</u>	<u>28</u>

The Key Management Personnel of the academy trust comprise the Senior Management Team as listed on page 2. The total amount of employee benefits (including employer pension contributions) received by Key Management Personnel for their services to the academy trust was £249,244 (2022: £263,219). The average number of full-time equivalent Key Management Personnel was 2 (2022: 2).

The average number of full-time equivalent persons employed by the academy trust was as follows:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
Teachers	207	182
Administration and support	205	178
Management	2	2
Total	<u>414</u>	<u>362</u>

11. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS - TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

One or more of the trustees has been paid remuneration or has received other benefits from an employment with the academy trust. The Headteacher and other staff trustees only receive remuneration in respect of services they provide undertaking the roles of Headteacher and other staff members under their contracts of employment, and not in respect of their role as trustees.

The value of trustees' remuneration and other benefits was as follows:

S London (CFO, accounting officer and staff trustee)
- remuneration £150,000 - £155,000 (2022: £140,000 - £145,000)
- employer pension contributions paid £35,000 - £40,000 (2022: £30,000-£35,000)

During the year ended 31 August 2023, expenses totalling £nil (2022: £nil) were reimbursed to nil trustees (2022: nil trustees) in respect of their employment during their period of office.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

12. TRUSTEES' AND OFFICERS' INSURANCE

The academy trust has opted into the Department for Education's risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to insurance where UK government funds cover losses that arise. This scheme protects trustees and officers from claims arising from negligent acts, errors or omissions occurring whilst on academy business, and provides cover up to £10,000,000. It is not possible to quantify the trustees and officers indemnity element from the overall cost of the RPA scheme.

13. CENTRAL SERVICES

The academy trust has provided the following central services to its academies during the year:

- Human resources
- Financial services
- Legal services
- Educational and support services
- Other services as arising

The academy trust charges for these services on the basis of income received (pro-rate). The actual amounts charged during the year were as follows:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Bower Park Academy	1,034,350	837,963
The Brittons Academy	727,472	681,030
Hall Mead School	1,120,190	966,982
Hacton Primary	483,686	427,174
	<u>3,365,698</u>	<u>2,913,149</u>

14. INTANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Computer software £
COST	
At 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023	<u>35,100</u>
AMORTISATION	
At 1 September 2022 and 31 August 2023	<u>35,100</u>
NET BOOK VALUE	
At 31 August 2023	<u>-</u>
At 31 August 2022	<u>-</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

15. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Freehold property £	Long leasehold £	Fixtures and fittings £
COST			
At 1 September 2022	41,748,255	43,893,659	3,205,653
Additions	278,852	13,258,276	419,481
At 31 August 2023	42,027,107	57,151,935	3,625,134
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 September 2022	3,755,962	1,819,432	244,933
Charge for year	576,024	318,331	645,329
At 31 August 2023	4,331,986	2,137,763	890,262
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 August 2023	37,695,121	55,014,172	2,734,872
At 31 August 2022	37,992,293	42,074,227	2,960,720
COST			
At 1 September 2022	62,023	646,554	89,556,144
Additions	-	104,618	14,061,227
At 31 August 2023	62,023	751,172	103,617,371
DEPRECIATION			
At 1 September 2022	62,023	419,286	6,301,636
Charge for year	-	166,741	1,706,425
At 31 August 2023	62,023	586,027	8,008,061
NET BOOK VALUE			
At 31 August 2023	-	165,145	95,609,310
At 31 August 2022	-	227,268	83,254,508

Included in cost or valuation of land and buildings is freehold land of £44,395,000 (2022 - £44,395,000) which is not depreciated.

The freehold land and buildings at The Brittons Academy were independently professionally valued at conversion to academy status by Hilbery Chaplin in September 2011.

The freehold land and buildings at Hall Mead School were independently professionally valued at conversion to academy status by Hilbery Chaplin in October 2011. The additions in 2021 are included at estimated fair value on completion by Bowmer and Kirkland, Quantity Surveyors.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

15. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS - continued

Hall Mead School was a successful applicant to the second phase of the DfE Priority School Buildings Programme 2. This programme completed in December 2020. The buildings have been included at estimated fair value in these financial statements.

The leasehold land and buildings at Bower Park Academy were independently professionally valued by Mouchel Consulting in March 2013.

The land and buildings at Bower Park Academy are owned by London Borough of Havering. The academy trust holds a 125 year lease on a peppercorn rent from 1 February 2013.

The land and buildings at Hacton Primary School are owned by London Borough of Havering. The academy trust holds a 125 year lease on a peppercorn rent from 1 September 2018.

The land and buildings at both Ardleigh Green School's are owned by London Borough of Havering. The academy trust holds a 125 year lease on a peppercorn rent from 28 November 2022.

Included in long leasehold additions is £13,165,000 of land and buildings transferred in on the conversion of Ardleigh Green Infant School and Ardleigh Green Primary School from the Local Authority to the academy trust. No furniture or computer equipment was included on conversion. These assets have been expended directly by the school, rather than the Local Authority, prior to transfer. As these assets had a "nil cost" to the academy trust, they have not been capitalised on conversion.

The trustees consider that the valuations of land and buildings remain appropriate for the purposes of these financial statements and that there has been no impairment to these assets.

16. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Trade debtors	207,010	433,482
Other debtors	12,410	8,205
VAT	101,152	108,938
Prepayments and accrued income	314,475	103,941
	<u>635,047</u>	<u>654,566</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

17. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Trade creditors	880,929	698,266
Other creditors	921,858	701,233
Budget deficit on LA funds	255,754	-
Accruals and deferred income	757,089	1,305,612
	<u>2,815,630</u>	<u>2,705,111</u>

Deferred income (included in above total)

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 September 2022	933,656	1,262,006
Resources deferred during the year	579,544	72,103
Amounts released from previous years	(933,656)	(400,453)
	<u>579,544</u>	<u>933,656</u>

Deferred income at the balance sheet date is represented by £nil (2022: £389,284) in relation to capital grant funding received in advance and £579,544 (2022: £544,372) being other monies received in advance of the next financial year in respect of school trips, lettings, pupil premium grants and other sundry items.

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

	Unrestricted fund	Restricted funds	Restricted fixed asset funds	31/8/23 Total funds
	£	£	£	£
Fixed assets	-	-	95,609,310	95,609,310
Current assets	2,253,829	(29,881)	1	2,223,949
Current liabilities	-	(2,815,630)	-	(2,815,630)
Pension liability	-	(596,000)	-	(596,000)
	<u>2,253,829</u>	<u>(3,441,511)</u>	<u>95,609,311</u>	<u>94,421,629</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

18. ANALYSIS OF NET ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS - continued

Comparative information in respect of the preceding period is as follows:

			31/8/22
	Unrestricted fund £	Restricted funds £	Restricted fixed asset funds £
			Total funds £
Fixed assets	-	-	83,254,508
Current assets	2,056,310	945,688	-
Current liabilities	-	(2,705,111)	-
Pension liability	-	(1,938,000)	-
	<u>2,056,310</u>	<u>(3,697,423)</u>	<u>83,254,508</u>
			<u>81,613,395</u>

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

	At 1/9/22 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/8/23 £
Restricted general funds				
Restricted general funds	(1,759,423)	(670,180)	(415,908)	(2,845,511)
Restricted fixed assets funds	83,254,508	11,938,895	415,908	95,609,311
Restricted general funds - pension reserve	(1,938,000)	1,342,000	-	(596,000)
	<u>79,557,085</u>	<u>12,610,715</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>92,167,800</u>
Unrestricted fund				
Unrestricted income funds	2,056,310	197,519	-	2,253,829
	<u>81,613,395</u>	<u>12,808,234</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>94,421,629</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Restricted general funds				
Restricted general funds	27,371,583	(28,041,763)	-	(670,180)
Restricted fixed assets funds	13,766,935	(1,828,040)	-	11,938,895
Restricted general funds - pension reserve	(314,000)	(327,000)	1,983,000	1,342,000
	<u>40,824,518</u>	<u>(30,196,803)</u>	<u>1,983,000</u>	<u>12,610,715</u>
Unrestricted fund				
Unrestricted income funds	706,233	(508,714)	-	197,519
	<u>41,530,751</u>	<u>(30,705,517)</u>	<u>1,983,000</u>	<u>12,808,234</u>

Comparatives for movement in funds

	At 1/9/21 £	Net movement in funds £	Transfers between funds £	At 31/8/22 £
Restricted general funds				
Restricted general funds	(982,699)	503,360	(1,280,084)	(1,759,423)
Restricted fixed assets funds	83,096,036	(1,121,612)	1,280,084	83,254,508
Restricted general funds - pension reserve	(11,603,000)	9,665,000	-	(1,938,000)
	<u>70,510,337</u>	<u>9,046,748</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>79,557,085</u>
Unrestricted fund				
Unrestricted income funds	1,966,354	89,956	-	2,056,310
	<u>72,476,691</u>	<u>9,136,704</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>81,613,395</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Comparative net movement in funds, included in the above are as follows:

	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Gains and losses £	Movement in funds £
Restricted general funds				
Restricted general funds	22,959,042	(22,455,682)	-	503,360
Restricted fixed assets funds	572,696	(1,694,308)	-	(1,121,612)
Restricted general funds - pension reserve	-	(1,564,000)	11,229,000	9,665,000
	<u>23,531,738</u>	<u>(25,713,990)</u>	<u>11,229,000</u>	<u>9,046,748</u>
Unrestricted fund				
Unrestricted income funds	404,338	(314,382)	-	89,956
	<u>404,338</u>	<u>(314,382)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>89,956</u>
TOTAL FUNDS	<u><u>23,936,076</u></u>	<u><u>(26,028,372)</u></u>	<u><u>11,229,000</u></u>	<u><u>9,136,704</u></u>

Net movements in restricted general funds, included above are as follows:

	Brought Forward £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers Funds £	Gains/ (Losses) £	Carried Forward £
General annual grant	(1,7549,423)	21,540,415	(22,210,596)	(415,908)	-	(2,845,511)
Pupil premium	-	1,013,969	(1,013,969)	-	-	-
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,899,758	(1,899,758)	-	-	-
Local authority grants	-	2,690,554	(2,690,554)	-	-	-
Other activities	-	482,640	(482,640)	-	-	-
Transfer Local Auth-conversion	-	(255,754)	255,754	-	-	-
Pension reserve	(1,938,000)	-	(641,000)	-	1,983,000	(596,000)
Total funds	<u>(3,697,423)</u>	<u>27,371,583</u>	<u>(28,682,763)</u>	<u>(415,908)</u>	<u>1,983,000</u>	<u>(3,441,511)</u>

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Unrestricted general fund - created to recognise the income and expenditure in respect of activities undertaken by the academy trust which fall outside the scope of its core activities.

General Annual Grant (GAG) - represents the core funding for the educational activities of the academy trust via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE). The GAG fund has been set up because the GAG must be used for the normal running costs of the academy trust.

Pupil Premium fund - established to recognise the restricted funding from the ESFA to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers.

Other DfE/ESFA funds - created to recognise the restricted funding received from the DfE and ESFA which fall outside the scope of core funding.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

Notes to the Financial Statements - continued for the Year Ended 31 August 2023

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Local Authority funds - created to recognise the income received from the London Borough of Havering as a contribution towards the cost of the academy trust's revenue expenditure.

Other activities funds - established to recognise all other restricted funding that cannot be classified above but fall outside the scope of core activities.

Pension reserve - represents the LGPS deficit in relation to support staff employed by the academy trust and through which all LGPS scheme movements are recognised.

DfE/ESFA capital grants - created to recognise such grants received for the purpose of the acquisition of tangible fixed assets. As tangible fixed assets are purchased, a transfer is made to the NBV of fixed assets fund.

NBV of fixed assets - created to recognise the tangible fixed assets held by the academy trust, equivalent to the NBV of tangible fixed assets. Depreciation of such assets is transferred to this fund.

Under the funding agreement with the Secretary of State, the academy trust was not subject to a limit on the amount of GAG that it could carry forward at 31 August 2023.

Total funds analysis by academy

Fund balances at 31 August 2023 were allocated as follows:

	31/8/23 £	31/8/22 £
Bower Park Academy	(116,123)	491,459
The Brittons Academy	424,125	805,544
Hall Mead School	(157,141)	348,534
Hacton Primary	(115,206)	(202,149)
Ardleigh Green Infant	10,642	
Ardleigh Green Primary	(381,827)	
Central Services	(256,152)	(1,146,591)
	(591,682)	296,887
Restricted fixed asset fund	95,609,311	83,254,508
Pension reserve	(596,000)	(1,938,000)
Total	94,421,629	81,613,395

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

19. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS - continued

Total cost analysis by academy

Expenditure incurred by each academy during the year was as follows:

	Teaching & Educational Support Staff £	Other Support Staff Costs £	Education Supplies £	Other Costs Excluding Depreciation £	31/8/23 £	31/8/22 £
Bower Park Academy	4,675,500	372,647	608,152	1,433,998	7,090,297	6,181,054
The Brittons Academy	3,695,447	89,087	364,343	829,042	4,977,919	4,877,711
Hall Mead School	5,114,785	70,621	541,463	1,787,251	7,514,117	7,161,846
Hacton Primary	2,635,940	73,808	137,332	686,633	3,533,713	3,743,355
Ardleigh Green Infant	926,089		27,736	249,954	1,203,779	
Ardleigh Green Primary	1,099,864		67,663	270,849	1,438,376	
Central Services	932,794	-	28,982	2,279,112	3,240,889	3,061,786
Academy Trust	<u>19,080,417</u>	<u>606,163</u>	<u>1,775,670</u>	<u>7,536,839</u>	<u>28,999,090</u>	<u>5,025,754</u>

20. PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS

The academy trust's employees belong to two principal pension schemes: the Teachers' Pension Scheme England and Wales (TPS) for academic and related staff, and the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) for non-teaching staff, which is managed by London Borough of Havering. Both are multi-employer defined benefit schemes.

The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS related to the period ended 31 March 2016 and of the LGPS to the period ended 31 March 2019.

There were no outstanding or prepaid contributions at either the beginning or the end of the financial year.

Teachers' pension scheme

The Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) is a statutory, contributory, defined benefit scheme, governed by the Teachers' Pension Scheme Regulations 2014. Membership is automatic for teachers in academies. All teachers have the option to opt-out of the TPS following enrolment.

The TPS is an unfunded scheme to which both the member and employer makes contributions, as a percentage of salary - these contributions are credited to the Exchequer. Retirement and other pension benefits are paid by public funds provided by Parliament.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

20. PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS - continued

Valuation of the teachers' pension scheme

The Government Actuary, using normal actuarial principles, conducts a formal actuarial review of the TPS in accordance with the Public Service Pensions (Valuations and Employer Cost Cap) Directions 2014 published by HM Treasury every 4 years. The aim of the review is to specify the level of future contributions. Actuarial scheme valuations are dependent on assumptions about the value of future costs, design of benefits and many other factors. The latest actuarial valuation of the TPS was carried out as at 31 March 2016. The valuation report was published by the Department for Education on 5 March 2019. The key elements of the valuation and subsequent consultation are:

- employer contribution rates set at 23.68% of pensionable pay (including a 0.08% administration levy)
- total scheme liabilities (pensions currently in payment and the estimated cost of future benefits) for service to the effective date of £218,100 million and notional assets (estimated future contributions together with the notional investments held at the valuation date) of £196,100 million, giving a notional past service deficit of £22,000 million
- the SCAPE rate, set by HMT, is used to determine the notional investment return. The current SCAPF rate is 2.4% above the rate of CPI. The assumed real rate of return is 2.4% in excess of prices and 2% in excess of earnings. The rate of real earnings growth is assumed to be 2.2%. The assumed nominal rate of return including earnings growth is 4.45%.

The next valuation result is due to be implemented from 1 April 2024.

The employer's pension costs paid to TPS in the period amounted to £2,494,321 (2022 - £2,125,430).

A copy of the valuation report and supporting documentation is on the Teachers' Pensions website.

Under the definitions set out in FRS 102, the TPS is an unfunded multi-employer pension scheme. The academy trust has accounted for its contributions to the scheme as if it were a defined contribution scheme. The academy trust has set out above the information available on the scheme.

Local government pension scheme

The LGPS is a funded defined benefit pension scheme, with the assets held in separate trustee-administered funds. The total contribution made for the year ended 31 August 2023 was £1,738,000 (2022 - £1,218,000), of which employers' contributions totalled £1,385,000 (2022 - £966,000) and employees contributions totalled £353,000 (2022 - £252,000). The agreed contribution rates for future years are 22.6-24.8% for employers and 5.5-12.5% for employees.

Parliament has agreed, at the request of the Secretary of State for Education, to a guarantee that, in the event of an academy trust closure, outstanding Local Government Pension Scheme liabilities would be met by the Department for Education. The guarantee came into force on 18 July 2013.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

20. PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS - continued

The amounts recognised in the Balance Sheet are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Present value of funded obligations	(19,824,000)	(18,705,000)
Fair value of plan assets	19,228,000	16,767,000
	<u>(596,000)</u>	<u>(1,938,000)</u>
Present value of unfunded obligations	-	-
Deficit	<u>(596,000)</u>	<u>(1,938,000)</u>
Net liability	<u><u>(596,000)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,938,000)</u></u>

The amounts recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Current service cost	1,615,000	2,327,000
Net interest from net defined benefit asset/liability	864,000	494,000
Past service cost	-	-
	<u>2,479,000</u>	<u>2,821,000</u>
Actual return on plan assets	<u><u>(510,000)</u></u>	<u><u>(1,581,000)</u></u>

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligation are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Opening defined benefit obligation	18,705,000	28,771,000
Current service cost	1,615,000	2,327,000
Contributions by scheme participants	353,000	252,000
Interest cost	864,000	494,000
Transfers from Local Authority on conversion	1,167,000	-
Actuarial losses/(gains)	(2,493,000)	(12,810,000)
Benefits paid	(387,000)	(329,000)
	<u>19,824,000</u>	<u>18,705,000</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

20. PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS - continued

Changes in the fair value of scheme assets are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Opening fair value of scheme assets	16,767,000	17,168,000
Transfers from Local Authority on conversion	853,000	-
Contributions by employer	1,385,000	966,000
Contributions by scheme participants	353,000	252,000
Interest income	767,000	291,000
Actuarial gains/(losses)	(510,000)	(1,581,000)
Benefits paid	(387,000)	(329,000)
	<u>19,228,000</u>	<u>16,767,000</u>

The amounts recognised in other recognised gains and losses are as follows:

31/8/23	31/8/22
£	£
-	-
<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

The major categories of scheme assets as amounts of total scheme assets are as follows:

	Defined benefit pension plans	
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Equities	8,268,040	7,042,140
Debt instruments	5,768,400	4,527,090
Property	3,845,600	4,527,090
Cash	1,345,960	670,680
	<u>19,228,000</u>	<u>16,767,000</u>

The actuarial return on scheme assets was -2.2% (2022: -7.3%).

Principal actuarial assumptions at the Balance Sheet date (expressed as weighted averages):

	31/8/23	31/8/22
Discount rate for scheme liabilities	5.20%	4.25%
Future salary increases	3.69%	3.75%
Future pension increases	2.99%	3.05%

Empower Learning Academy Trust**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023****20. PENSION AND SIMILAR OBLIGATIONS - continued**

The current mortality assumptions include sufficient allowance for future improvements in mortality rates. The assumed life expectations on retirement age 65 are:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
Retiring today		
Males	20.9	21.6
Females	24.2	24
Retiring in 20 years		
Males	21.5	22.6
Females	25.3	25.7
Sensitivity analysis		
	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Discount rate +0.1%	377	406
Discount rate -0.1%	(377)	(406)
Mortality assumption - 1 year increase	744	749
Mortality assumption - 1 year decrease	(744)	(749)
CPI rate +0.1%	359	381
CPI rate -0.1%	(359)	(381)

An allowance is included for future retirements to elect to take 50% of the maximum additional tax-free cash up to HMRC limits for pre-April 2008 service and 75% of the maximum tax-free cash for post-April 2008 service.

21. LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS, INCLUDING OPERATING LEASES

Minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases fall due as follows:

	31/8/23	31/8/22
	£	£
Within one year	9,724	18,134
Between one and five years	13,247	34,177
	<u>22,971</u>	<u>52,311</u>

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Notes to the Financial Statements - continued
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

22. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

Owing to the nature of the academy trust and the composition of the board of trustees being drawn from local public and private sector organisations, transactions may take place with organisations in which the trustees have an interest. No such related party transactions took place in the financial period.

No other related party transactions took place in the period of account, other than certain trustees' remuneration and expenses already disclosed in note 11.

23. ULTIMATE CONTROLLING PARTY

There is no ultimate controlling party.

24. COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE

The academy trust is a company limited by guarantee and does not have share capital.

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS				
Donations and capital grants				
Donations	98,856	-	98,856	73,912
Capital grants	-	601,935	601,935	572,696
	<u>98,856</u>	<u>601,935</u>	<u>700,791</u>	<u>646,608</u>
Transfer from Local Authority on conversion	-	12,595,246	12,595,246	-
Other trading activities				
Hire of facilities	187,442	-	187,442	148,495
Other self generated income	418,478	-	418,478	181,084
	<u>605,920</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>605,920</u>	<u>329,579</u>
Investment income				
Deposit account interest	1,457	1	1,458	845
Charitable activities				
General annual grant (GAG)	-	21,540,415	21,540,415	18,616,565
Pupil premium	-	1,013,969	1,013,969	789,310
Other DfE/ESFA grants	-	1,899,758	1,899,758	1,102,508
Local authority grants	-	2,690,554	2,690,554	2,118,754
Other income	-	482,640	482,640	331,907
	<u>-</u>	<u>27,627,336</u>	<u>27,627,336</u>	<u>22,959,044</u>
Total incoming resources	706,233	40,824,518	41,530,751	23,936,076
EXPENDITURE				
Charitable activities				
Wages	-	15,053,529	15,053,529	12,088,056
Social security	-	1,532,567	1,532,567	1,265,577
Pensions	-	2,494,321	2,494,321	2,125,430
Supply teacher costs	-	606,163	606,163	547,632
Educational supplies	98,441	1,677,229	1,775,670	1,394,536
	<u>98,441</u>	<u>21,363,809</u>	<u>21,462,250</u>	<u>17,421,231</u>
Support costs				
Management				
Wages	-	2,358,618	2,358,618	1,952,775
Carried forward	-	2,358,618	2,358,618	1,952,775

This page does not form part of the statutory financial statements

Empower Learning Academy Trust

**Detailed Statement of Financial Activities
for the Year Ended 31 August 2023**

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	31/8/23 Total funds £	31/8/22 Total funds £
Management				
Brought forward	-	2,358,618	2,358,618	1,952,775
Social security	-	180,797	180,797	153,607
Pensions	-	1,615,000	1,615,000	2,327,000
Supply teacher costs	-	630,696	630,696	614,630
LGPS pension finance cost	-	97,000	97,000	203,000
Apprenticeship levy	-	72,430	72,430	52,229
Maintenance of premises and equipment	-	1,274,585	1,274,585	1,291,777
Depreciation of tangible and heritage assets	-	1,706,427	1,706,427	981,036
	-	7,935,553	7,935,553	7,576,054
Other				
Technology costs	-	254,753	254,753	217,740
Other costs	410,273	596,649	1,006,922	770,637
	410,273	851,402	1,261,675	988,377
Governance costs				
Auditors' remuneration	-	46,039	46,039	42,710
Total resources expended	508,714	30,196,803	30,705,517	26,028,372
Net (expenditure)/income	197,519	10,627,715	10,825,234	(2,092,296)

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